

Message Text

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73

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 AID-20 DRC-01

/134 W

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R 062355Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3027

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

CINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 2520

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ELAB

SUBJECT: MAY DAY AFTERMATH; SITUATION CALMS; DE LEON FLORES

BLAMES GOG

REF: GUATEMALA 2466

1. POLITICAL CLIMATE HAS RETURNED TO RELATIVE CALM AFTER MAY DAY DISTURBANCES. THERE HAVE BEEN NO MORE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION OF ANY KIND. ONE OF THE DEAD MARCHERS WAS BURIED QUIETLY ON MAY 2 WITHOUT PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT IN PRESS. PID ADDED ITS VOICE TO THOSE CONDEMNING MAY 1 VIOLENCE IN PAID AD DATED MAY 2 BUT PUBLISHED IN WEEKEND PRESS. PIC DECLARATION GENERALLY FOLLOWED LINES OF GOG BULLETIN ON MAY DAY DISTURBANCES BY BLAMING PROBLEMS ON LEADERS OF OPPOSITION FRONT. ITS LANGUAGE, HOWEVER, WAS FAR LESS INFLAMATORY THAN THAT USED IN MLN DECLARATION.

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2. DCG DEPUTY DE LEON FLORES IS RECOVERING FROM HIS WOUNDS. ON MAY 6 HE GAVE PRESS WRITTEN STATEMENT OF HIS VIEWS ON MAY DAY DISTURBANCES IN WHICH HE "CONDEMNED AND BLAMED" GOG FOR "TREACHEROUS ATTACK" HE SUFFERED BECAUSE GOVERNMENT HAD ALLOWED ARMED GROUPS OTHER THAN POLICE AND MILITARY TO OPERATE WITHOUT CONTROL. HE SAID ORGANIZERS OF MAY DAY CELEBRATION HAD PLANNED FOR COMPLETELY NON-POLITICAL DEMONSTRATION. ONLY EXCEPTION WAS THAT MAYOR COLOM ARGUETA HAD BEEN PROGRAMED TO SPEAK AT LABOR RALLY SOLELY FOR PURPOSE OF ANNOUNCING NEW BENEFIT FOR MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES. HE ALSO SAID THAT RALLY HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR PLAZA IN FRONT OF MUNICIPAL BUILDING ONLY BECUASE GOG WOULD NOT PERMIT IT TO TAKE PLACE IN CENTRAL PARK. HE ASSERTED GOG'S REFUSAL TO LET PARADE END AT CENTRAL PARK OPENED DOOR TO "MACHIAVELIAN OPPORTUNISM" OF POLITICIANS (READ FURD AND DCG LEADERS AMONG OTHERS). HE SAID THAT PARADE MARSHALS HAD TRIED TO CONTROL POLITICAL AGITATORS AND TO REMOVE POLITICAL BANNERS FROM PARADE.

3. DE LEON ALSO ACCUSED DIRECTOR GENERAL OF NATIONAL POLICE FOR ALLOWING RIOT SQUAD TO ADVANCE INTO AUTHORIZED PARADE ROUTE AS WAS "DEMONSTRATED BY THE PLACES WHERE THE DEATHS AND WOUNDINGS OCCURRED." TAKING INTO ACCOUNT, DE LEON FLORES SAID, THAT HE WAS WOUNDED ON SPEAKERS' PLATFORM, THE MAY DAY VIOLENCE WAS PART OF A PLAN TO CREATE CHAOS IN THE WORKERS' MOVEMENT. ALSO, DE LEON DECLARED THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE HIS WOUNDING WAS RELATED TO HIS ASSOCIATION WITH CARLOS GEHLERT MATA, DIRECTLY CONTRADICTING GOG STATEMENT TO THAT EFFECT IN ITS MAY 1 BULLETIN.

4. COMMENT: DE LEON'S DECLARATION IS CONFUSING BUT IT APPEARS DESIGNED TO CONVEY THE IMPRESSIONS THE GOG IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE THAT MADE DISTURBANCES POSSIBLE; TO RATIONALIZE COLOM ARGUETA'S PARTICIPATION IN RALLY; TO ASSERT POLITICAL CAST OF RALLY WAS NOT PLANNED BY MARCH ORGANIZERS WHO WERE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY POLITICIANS. TORTUOUS LANGUAGE OF DECLARATION WILL PROBABLY LIMIT ITS PUBLIC RELATION

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EFFECTS, BUT GOG CERTAINLY WILL NOT BE HAPPY WITH DE LEON'S THROWING ULTIMATE BLAME FOR VIOLENCE ON GOVERNMENT.

END COMMENT.

5. PRESS REPORTED THAT GOG BROUGHT LEGAL CHARGES AGAINST COLOM ARGUETA IN A GUATEMALA CITY COURT FOR HIS ALLEGED ROLE IN INCITING VIOLENCE DURING MAY DAY DISTURBANCES. GOG'S MAY 1 BULLETIN HAD PROMISED THAT ACTION WOULD BE

TAKEN. EL GRAFICO NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH ACTIONS
RARELY RESULT IN CONVICTIONS.

6. PERHAPS ONE REASON FOR RELATIVELY CALMED
SITUATION IS ABSENCE FROM GUATEMALA OF SEVERAL IMPORTANT
POLITICAL LEADERS, INCLUDING OPPOSITION LEADERS COLOM
ARGUETA AND DE LEON SCHLOTTER, AS WELL AS MLN LEADER
MARIO SANDOVAL.
MELOY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, PERSONAL OPINION, POLITICAL SITUATION, DEATHS, CIVIL DISORDERS, MAY DAY, OPPOSITION PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974GUATEM02520
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740109-0636
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740572/aaaacmnu.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: GUATEMALA 2466
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 SEP 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 SEP 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <03 FEB 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAY DAY AFTERMATH; SITUATION CALMS; DE LEON FLORES BLAMES GOG
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ELAB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005